



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Norovirus Prevention

Foodborne Norovirus Outbreaks – United States, 2009-2012

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

If you're suffering from vomiting and diarrhea, you might be among the millions of Americans who get sick from norovirus each year.

Dr. Aron Hall is an epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. He's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent norovirus outbreaks from contaminated food. Welcome to the show, Aron.

[Dr. Hall] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Aron, let's begin with what is norovirus?

[Dr. Hall] Norovirus refers to a group of viruses. They were first discovered in the early 1970s and they're actually the leading cause of gastroenteritis and foodborne disease in the United States.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of norovirus?

[Dr. Hall] Norovirus causes primarily vomiting and diarrhea, but it can sometimes cause fever, headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. Usually, illness lasts for about one to three days and sometimes people can get severely dehydrated.

[Dr. Gaynes] How is norovirus transmitted?

[Dr. Hall] People are ultimately the source of norovirus infections. It can spread through direct contact between people or through contaminated food, water, or environmental surfaces.

[Dr. Gaynes] Aron, how can food become contaminated with norovirus?

[Dr. Hall] The primary culprit are food handlers that are touching foods with their bare hands while they're infected with norovirus. Most often, foods that are considered ready-to-eat, such as salads and sandwiches, become contaminated.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some strategies for preventing norovirus outbreaks from contaminated food?

[Dr. Hall] The most important thing is that people should not be preparing food for others while they're sick with symptoms of norovirus and for at least 48 hours after they're symptoms have stopped. Additionally, people should be washing their hands appropriately before handling foods, they should clean surfaces, they should wash fresh produce, and they should make sure to cook shellfish thoroughly.

[Dr. Gaynes] Aron, where can listeners get more information about norovirus?

[Dr. Hall] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/norovirus.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Aron. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Aron Hall about ways to prevent norovirus outbreaks from contaminated food.

Remember, to help prevent norovirus outbreaks, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and thoroughly clean surfaces. Also, if you are vomiting or have diarrhea, don't prepare food for others until at least 48 hours after your symptoms are gone.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.